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Sale of essences with a high percentage of alcohol in the Nilgiris.

* 49 *Q.*—SRI S. B. ADITYAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Prohibition be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether it is a fact that at the meeting of the Nilgiris District Prohibition Advisory Committee held on May 20, 1952, the Collector of Nilgiris informed the Hon. the Minister for Prohibition that essences, containing up to 80 per cent alcohol are sold daily to the extent of Rs. 10,000 or more in the Nilgiris;

(*b*) whether it is a fact, that the Collector informed the Hon. Minister also that the sale of these essences in every nook and corner of the Nilgiris district had reached such proportions that even women and children had taken to it; and

(*c*) whether the essences come into Madras State from Mysore, Hyderabad and Travancore-Cochin, and if so, whether the Government have taken any action and if so, what steps in the matter?

THE HON. SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER:—" (*a*) Yes, Sir.

" (*b*) The Collector's report indicates that there is a large-scale sale of these essences.

" (*c*) The essences are imported into this State from Mysore, Hyderabad, Travancore-Cochin and West Bengal under the reciprocal arrangement system now existing with all these States. Government have now issued rules regulating the import, possession and sale of these essences for *bona fide* consumption."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN:—" It is evident from the answer given by the Hon. Minister that a very large number of addicts take to essences containing 80 per cent of alcohol. Will the Government take any action to enable these addicts to take to plain toddy instead of these poisonous substances?"

THE HON. SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER:—" The proposal goes against the Prohibition Act itself."

SRI M. P. GOVINDA MENON:—" The Hon. Minister said that new rules have been issued regulating the import, possession and sale of essences. May I know whether those rules would serve the purpose for which they were issued?"

THE HON. SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER:—" We have to wait and watch for sometime to see its effect."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN:—" Will the Government be pleased to give local option to various District Boards and Municipalities to enforce the Prohibition Act or not?"

THE HON. SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER:—" This question relates to a matter of policy. If the hon. Member gives notice of a fresh question, it will be considered."

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SRI S. B. ADITYAN:—"May I know whether the Government are of opinion that it is better that people drink these poisonous essences which burn the intestines and injure the body rather than drink toddy?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"With your permission, Sir, let me say this. Mr. Adityan, the Leader of the Opposition, is raising points of policy. We have thoroughly discussed it recently. The Prohibition Act stands and any question of merit and what amendment may be made, will be considered without undue haste."

SRI S. B. ADITYAN:—"Will the Government also consider the suggestion of the local option?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"Local option, I understand. Long ago it was rejected by me as well as by those who worked with me. But even that will be considered. The difficulties do not arise out of any local opinions. The difficulty arises out of the criminal tendency to make money out of the addiction of some unfortunate people."

SRI C. RAJESWARA RAO:—"Will the Hon. Chief Minister be pleased to state whether he is ready to take a referendum on the question of Prohibition in some districts or in the whole of the State?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"I would be ready but for the pernicious propaganda that is now going on."

SRI ALEXANDER GNANAMUTTU:—"According to the new rules under the Prohibition Act, any person can purchase 12 ounces of culinary essences. May I know, whether those 12 ounces are not enough to floor any person?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"New rules have been made after very great consideration of all points of view. I do not know if the hon. Member who has put the question has studied the rules so thoroughly as I would like him to do. These rules prescribe account-keeping and recording of the names of persons to whom the essence was sold and the like. If only we try honestly to carry out the regulations and, if there is no counter-propaganda of despair and failure, I think, the rules will work well?"

SRI M. HARISCHANDRA PRASAD:—"Are the Government aware of the fact that the officers of the Prohibition Department are encouraging illicit distillation in the districts and they are making money out of it?"

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—"It is a very general charge and the Prohibition Officers are having a bad name. They have an unfortunate and unpleasant duty to perform and I would ask them to be patient with these allegations."

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SRI M. HARISCHANDRA PRASAD:—" Will the Government consider the desirability of changing the old personnel of the Excise Department now in the Prohibition Department? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—" There are two sets of officers now in charge of the Prohibition work, as Hon. Members know. One set is the ordinary police officers and another set is Prohibition officers. When Prohibition was introduced on a large scale, a large number of officers of the Excise Department were taken into the Prohibition Department on the ground of their honesty, experience in the particular direction which was wanted. From time to time the Government will consider the removal of bad officers and the substitution of good officers."

SRI C. RAJESWARA RAO:—" Sir, in view of the fact that the Hon. Chief Minister is afraid of the referendum, will he suggest any other way of ascertaining the will of the people on the question of Prohibition? " 4-40 p.m.

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—" Sir, I am not afraid of a referendum. I am afraid of my friends on the other side. (Laughter.) I am not afraid of a regular real referendum on this matter. But I want to say at once this thing. There are some measures which are good for the people and they should not depend on a referendum." (Laughter.)

SRI M. P. GOVINDA MENON:—" Sir, when the Prohibition Act was introduced, it was introduced piecemeal, and it had adverse effects. While it worked well in some parts it did not work well in some other parts. So, may I advise the Hon. Chief Minister not to encourage local option as it would have the same adverse effect when the Act was introduced piecemeal? "

SRI C. RAJESWARA RAO:—" May I inquire of the Hon. Chief Minister, Sir, if liquor can be given on permits on grounds of health, why not toddy be given on permits, if there are doctors who advise the taking of toddy which is a mild alcoholic drink? May I ask why it cannot be done? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—" The point is when doctors give prescriptions we cannot go behind them, into the validity or the correctness thereof. They give their direction and that is followed."

SRI C. RAJESWARA RAO:—" Sir, the Hon. Chief Minister knows very well what is the alcoholic content in every drink. The other day he gave rather a big discourse on it in the other House. As everybody knows that the alcoholic content of toddy is very much lower than in other liquors, I ask the Chief Minister whether Government are ready to give permission for drinking toddy on grounds of health? "

THE HON. SRI C. RAJAGOPALACHARI:—" Provision has already been made in the Prohibition Act for giving, on

permits, permission to use alcoholic beverages up to a point on medical advice by those who hold a permit. But what sort of liquor the man may use, is left to the doctor to prescribe. Also I want hon. Members to remember that the liquor must be available. A certain class of liquor is available for sale on permits, while certain other classes of liquor are not available, because they are not allowed to be manufactured. The doctor's certificate does not depend on the kind of drink but on the amount of alcoholic content in a particular kind of liquor; whether it is arrack or liquor or any other thing, it does not matter. It depends on how much the particular person should drink to get a particular amount of alcoholic content."

Sale of essences in the Nilgiris district.

* 50 *Q.*—SRI ALEXANDER GNANAMUTTU: Will the Hon. the Minister for Phohibition be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government have verified the recent statement made by the Collector of the Nilgiris regarding the sale of essences;

(*b*) if so, the steps taken by the Government to stop their sale; and

(*c*) the exact quantity of these essences sold in the various districts of this State during the month of April 1952?

THE HON. SRI V. C. PALANISWAMI GOUNDER:—(*a*) Yes, Sir.

"(*b*) Government have since issued orders regulating the sale, possession and consumption of culinary essences in this State.

"(*c*) The information has been called for."

Audit report of the Government Transport Department.

* 51 *Q.*—SRI K. BALASUBRAMANYA AYYAR: Will the Hon. the Minister for Industries and Labour be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether an audit of the accounts of the Government Transport Department has been made; and

(*b*) whether the audit report, if completed, will be made available to the public?

THE HON. DR. U. KRISHNA RAO:—"(*a*) The accounts of the Government Transport up to the end of 31st March 1950 have been audited and copies of the audit reports have been furnished to the Legislature Secretariat Library for being made available to the Members of the Legislature.

"(*b*) The question of making the audit reports available or otherwise to the public will be considered."